DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 060 705 FL 002 953

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TITLE Bilingual Bicultural Education in the Compton Unified School District and Its Relevance to a Multi-Ethnic Community.
INSTITUTION Compton City Schools, Calif.
NOTE 5p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Biculturalism; Bilingual Education; *Bilingualism; Community Involvement; Cultural Education; Culturally Disadvantaged; Economically Disadvantaged; Educational Innovation; Educational Objectives; *Educational Strategies; English (Second Language); Ethnic Groups; Language Instruction; *Language Programs; *Mexican Americans; Minority Groups; Second Language Learning; Self Concept
IDENTIFIERS California; *Compton

ABSTRACT

The Compton Bilingual Plan is a multi-cultural program designed to foster language preservation as a national resource to promote a well-educated, well-adjusted citizenry able to function effectively in two languages and in two or more cultures. The children are taught in two languages, Spanish and English, and are openly participating in trans-racial communication in a multi-cultural classroom and community. All the children, within an integrated classroom environment, are offered the opportunity to become functional bilinguals and participate in one another's culture. (Author/VM)

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Bilingual Bicultural Education in the Compton Unified School District and Its Relevance to a Multi-Ethnica Community.

A position paper by Dr. Frank M. Goodman - Project Director/Manager Compton Bilingual Plan.

Monthly, non-English speaking Mexican-American (Chicano) children enter this school system handicaped by coming from an impoverished environment and deficient in functioning in a totally English language dominant learning atmosphere. Their academic placement worsens when many school personnel reject the utilization of their native language, Spanish, as a vehicle for classroom instruction in basic skills development and debase the student's native language skills to that of simple commands for disciplinary purposes. The demise of a linguistic advantage from a "culturally disadvantaged" child as corroborated by this writer and colleagues has conditioned the non-English speaker to an inferior self-concept and limited behavioral expectations for his personal achievement and success in this school system.

Not only does the professionally trained teacher finds it difficult to tteach English to this child using only a mono-lingual, non-native language approach for complete cognitive submersion or drowning effect, but the child himself finds it difficult to acquire new language skills, and growth in his native language is stifled. The focus is directed upon learning new concepts in a second language before this child has acquired them in his first language. This down grading of nis native language resource continues as he is physically removed part of the

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school day for segregated specialized second language instruction from a secure classroom environment interupting the teacher's daily program. This removal practice further contributes to the student's alienation of belonging in this society and being an active participant in his immediate classroom environment.

After his return to regular school room activities, both groups, English speaking and non-English speaking, have lost valuable bilingual language experiences.

With the increased awareness of pride in one's ethnic heritage among the minority groups who are being educated in this school system, has come a shift in the approach to language instruction. Dual language instruction or more appropriately called bilingual education, had been instituted at Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, Compton Unified School District in 1969-70 before sufficient research on the critical learning variables had been completed. Much additional experimental investigation is desperately needed to measure the acquisition of new concepts in a familiar versus an unfamiliar language. <u>There is no dispute upon the necessity to learn English to function effectively in the United States</u>. The focus is upon the vehicle of utilizing native language or second language strategies for the child to acquire new concepts, even before he has been able to comprehend them in his native language. Therefore, an approach to dual language instruction is a new idea and a totally innovative pedagogical technique to use. As all forms of education must be evaluated on the basis of the product, the Compton Plan with three years of experimentation invites professional inquiry.

The follow strategies are used to achieve the objectives of the Compton Bilingual Program.

1. For Mexican-American children whose mother tongue is Spanish, classroom instruction is given in Spanish while English is currently taught primarily as an oral language by a colleague teacher in a team approach.

2. For the native speakers of English who share the same classroom environment and live in the bilingual-bicultural community, Spanish is taught as a second language.

3. For all children of varied ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in the same classroom, transgrouping strategies are used to give them the opportunity to become functionally literate bilinguals in either Spanish or English and to share with understanding an appreciation of the minority culture in the CUSD which can only be gained by learning its language.

The classroom application of these strategies (plans or objectives) into tactics are as follows:

1. Basic skills in reading are absolutely essential to a pupil's success in school.

2. It is extremely difficult for an individual to learn to read successfully in a language he does not understand in its spoken form.

3. The teaching of reading skills should not be postponed until the child develops an adequate English vocabulary and is able to use various sentence patterns in that language.

4. That all children within an integrated classroom environment be offered opportunities to become functional bilinguals and participate in one another's culture.

This writer challenges the reader to research the narrative report of the Fourth Year Proposal curriculum guide and of particular professional interest the numerous PERT (Program Evaluation Research Techniques) diagrams in order to fully appreciate the numerous components involving joint community and professional growth. The fourth year guide delineates in great detail the products and processes needed to carry forward the long range goals developed to meet the Compton Community needs for bilingual, multi-cultural education. The long range and immediate goals have been developed and undertaken by the people who have served on the Bilingual Community Council (Directive in Scope). A review of the February 9, 1972 council minutes reflects the future perceived needs to advance bilingual education for all children. Copies of the fourth year proposal, curriculum guide including the third year proposal curriculum guide with its evaluation may be reviewed in the professional library of the CUSD. Again the professional teacher is invited to study the growth of this concept and its direction by comparing the narrative reports and activities delineated in the third and fourth year proposal curriculum guides.

The structure of this bilingual multi-cultural program fosters language preservation as a national resource to promote a well-educated, well-adjusted citizenry able to function effectively in two languages and two or more cultures. A mono-lingual-English language acquisition structure, typical of nany current programs, cannot be expected to foster preservation of native language treasure but rather the accelerated demise of the ethnic mother tongue. The Compton Bilingual Plan is not an expression of the status quo social structure, but an expression of planned social change through the evolutionary process of individual social awareness.

In conclusion, the Compton Bilingual Plan has exhibited responsible direction in developing and fulfilling performance objectives in both cognitive and affective domain. Language skills and cultural perspectives are added without progressively destroying the child's home language and culture. Furthermore, these developments take place with students of varied ethnic backgrounds. Bilingual multi-cultural education in a self contained classroom environment is sound policy. The children are taught in two languages, Spanish and English, and are openly participating in trans-racial communication in a multi-cultural classroom and community. Their parents, for the first time, are now in a better position to understand what is going on at school and to provide important support for the education of their children.